

e must never lose heart. I have a country scene of *The grain* same series as *Young ladies of the village*, a strange picture my soul is quite empty, my liver and heart full of gall. At men's café with 'Gai Savoir' people and go to bed with a ceers me up. You know my 'wife' got married. I no longer rently she was forced to it by poverty. That's how society en together 14 years. I gather Promayet is very unhappy omething. Pride and probity will be the death of us all. At ng, but I absolutely must be ready for the exhibition. Tell eived the canvases. I embrace you with all my heart.

6 Gustave Courbet (1819–1877) Statement on Realism

Courbet had intended *The Painter's Studio* for inclusion in the official exhibition at the 1855 World's Fair, which replaced the Salons of that and the previous year. It was rejected, however, together with the *Burial at Ornans*. The painter responded by reviving a plan for an independent display of his work, which he staged under the title 'Realism – Gustave Courbet' on a site near the entry to the fair. It was unprecedented for a retrospective survey of this nature to be mounted without state backing. The exceptional nature of the enterprise must have been made all the clearer by the inclusion in the official exhibition of a separate salon containing a large number of Ingres's most important works. Delacroix visited Courbet's pavilion and noted in his journal apropos the *Studio*, 'they have rejected one of the most singular works of our time' (IIIb2). Champfleury published an article in support of the 'Pavilion of Realism', and it has been suggested that he was the effective author of the following statement, which was printed above Courbet's initials as a preface to the catalogue. It is not unlikely that the wording was the product of some form of collaboration, but the style and sentiments are close enough to those of other known statements by the artist to justify leaving the attribution as it stands. The translation of the text is taken from *Gustave Courbet: 1819–1877*, London, 1978, p. 77.

The title 'realist' has been imposed on me in the same way as the title 'romantic' was imposed on the men of 1830. Titles have never given the right idea of things; if they did, works would be unnecessary.

Without going into the question as to the rightness or wrongness of a label which, let us hope, no one is expected to understand fully, I would only offer a few words of explanation which may avert misconception.

I have studied the art of the ancients and moderns without any dogmatic or preconceived ideas. I have not tried to imitate the former or to copy the latter, nor have I addressed myself to the pointless objective of 'art for art's sake'. No – all I have tried to do is to derive, from a complete knowledge of tradition, a reasoned sense of my own independence and individuality.

To achieve skill through knowledge – that has been my purpose. To record the manners, ideas and aspect of the age as I myself saw them – to be a man as well as a painter, in short to create living art – that is my aim.

G. C.

7 Jean-François Millet (1814–1875) on Truth in Painting

Millet was born of peasant stock in Normandy. His evident artistic talent gained him recognition and he was awarded financial support to go and study in Paris in 1837. The teaching of Paul Delaroche, the Romantic Salon painter, was not however congenial to him. None the less, apart from periods back in Normandy, Millet pursued an artistic career in Paris for twelve years. After only modest Salon success, and severe criticism in 1848, he finally left Paris in 1849 for the artistic colony in the village of Barbizon, in the forest of Fontainebleau. Millet was committed to representing the truth of peasant life, yet he did so under a predominantly religious aspect and did not personally wish to be identified with the socialist tendency with which he was frequently associated in the wake of 1848. He strove for a sense of truth which transcended the contingencies of time and place, while yet being rooted in the realities of a life of the soil and the seasons. There follow extracts from several of his letters, and from a notebook. The first letter (to Sensier, of 1850) and the last four (to Sensier and Pelloquet, of 1863, 1865 and 1867) are taken from the translations made by Julia Cartwright in her *Jean-François Millet: His Life and Letters*, London and New York: Swan Sonnenschein & Co, 1896, pp. 105–6, 239–40, 241–2, 283, 300. The notebook entry (on Sutter, of 1858) and the second letter (to Thoré, of 1862) are translated for the present volume by Jonathan Murphy, from the French text as printed in Etienne Moreau-Nélaton, *Millet raconté par lui-même*, three volumes, Paris: Henri Laurens, 1921, volume 2, pp. 60–1 and 106–7.

(i) Letter to Sensier, February 1850

My dear Sensier,

Yesterday, Friday, I received the colours, the oil, canvas, etc., which you sent me, and the accompanying sketch of the picture. These are the titles of the three pictures destined for the sale in question:

- (1) *A Woman Crushing Flax*;
- (2) *A Peasant and his Wife going to Work in the Fields*;
- (3) *Gatherers of Wood in the Forest*.

I do not know if the word *Ramasseurs* can appear in print. If not, you can call the picture, *Peasants Gathering Wood*, or anything else you choose. The picture consists of a man binding sticks in a faggot, and of two women, one cutting off a branch, the other carrying a load of wood. That is all.

As you will see by the titles of the pictures, there are neither nude women nor mythological subjects among them. I mean to devote myself to other subjects; not that I hold that sort of thing to be forbidden, but that I do not wish to feel myself compelled to paint them.

But, to tell the truth, peasant-subjects suit my nature best, for I must confess, at the risk of your taking me to be a Socialist, that the human side is what touches me most in art, and that if I could only do what I like, or at least attempt to do it, I would paint nothing that was not the result of an impression directly received from Nature, whether in landscape or in figures. The joyous side never shows itself to me; I know not if it exists, but I have never seen it. The gayest thing I know is the calm,